

INTERVIEW: CAMILLE KOUYOUMDJIAN



Image courtesy of Camille Kouyoumdjian

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Luca Curci talks with **Camille Kouyoumdjian**, honourable mention of **ITSLIQUID International Contest – 14th edition**.

“My goal as an artist is to portray the symbiotic relationship between the natural world and the living universe. Working in acrylic and mixed media, I depict nature through the lens of

environmental sustainability, capturing viewpoints of the flora and fauna that inhabit a particular landscape".

Image courtesy of Camille Kouyoumdjian

Luca Curci – How did you get to your current artistic practice?

Camille Kouyoumdjian – Life's journey often takes unexpected turns, leading us to discover hidden passions and untapped potential. In my case, my path from working as a policy wonk in international development to becoming a Master Gardener and Beekeeper eventually led to my true passion: artwork. It all began with my love for the outdoors

and a deep connection to nature. Exploring diverse cultures and ecosystems eventually blossomed into a career in creative activism. I felt compelled to capture the beauty of this interdependence in a meaningful and expressive way, communicating the importance of environmental sustainability in a way that others could relate to. I began painting intuitively, using broad, loose strokes of color and experimenting with mixed media. Painting allowed me to explore my responses to nature's wonders in a free-flowing abstract sense. Establishing a connection between natural beauty and the inner peace it brought me felt liberating. I began to understand how art can respond to, reflect and even define a place, a moment, and even an era. My final renditions are a fusion of realism and intuition, a reflection of the emotional impact that nature has not only on me, but on all humanity.

Image courtesy of Camille Kouyoumdjian

LC – What are your thoughts while you paint? Do you have any habits or rituals while you work?

CK – A blank canvas provides an opportunity to build connections between the chaos of the outside world and the deeply human response it evokes. I begin by walking outdoors daily. I sometimes take photos, but more often than not, I listen, watch the light and shadows change, and clear

my mind of any clutter! It is a meditative process. When I return to my studio, I begin laying down marks with charcoal, carron dache, colored pencil, and inks. I then go over it with gesso and add some texture using various tools. I let this first layer dry and put it away for a day or so. I then look at some reference photos and begin to look for values. I add acrylic colors, and the painting evolves. Sometimes my artwork is quite literal, capturing the light and beauty of a particular moment. Moving away from that moment, the work evolves into a more abstract representation of memory and emotion. Art can never truly replicate nature; we may only attempt to interpret it. My goal is to evoke a sense of connection, timelessness, and hope for the future.

LC – Is there an unrealised or unrealisable project, even a crazy one, that you would like to work on?

CK – I would love to be able to spend an extended period of time in a series of national parks, exploring both the trails and the history of the indigenous people living there. I would then like to paint the intersection of these moments and share my work with the public as a sort of climate advocacy project. I think representing historically underrepresented voices, particularly those who have been marginalized, in the climate conversation is essential. Art could be a bridge to capture the sacrifices made, both of the land and the people who call it home.

Image courtesy of Camille Kouyoumdjian

LC – What are the three hashtags essential to define your poetics that you could not give up?

CK – #artactivism #climateart #environmentalart

LC – Where do you find your inspiration?

CK – I'm inspired by conservation, the overwhelming beauty of preserved lands, the ancient origins of earth-based art, and humankind's resilience. I believe art is essential to both documenting beauty, ugliness, and full gamut of emotions evoked by our times. Looking historically at how art has influenced and grown from external forces (such as the post-war period), radically changed how I viewed the power

of artists to carry the world forward.

Image courtesy of Camille Kouyoumdjian